

# A

# Step Back in Time

## Through the Historic West End

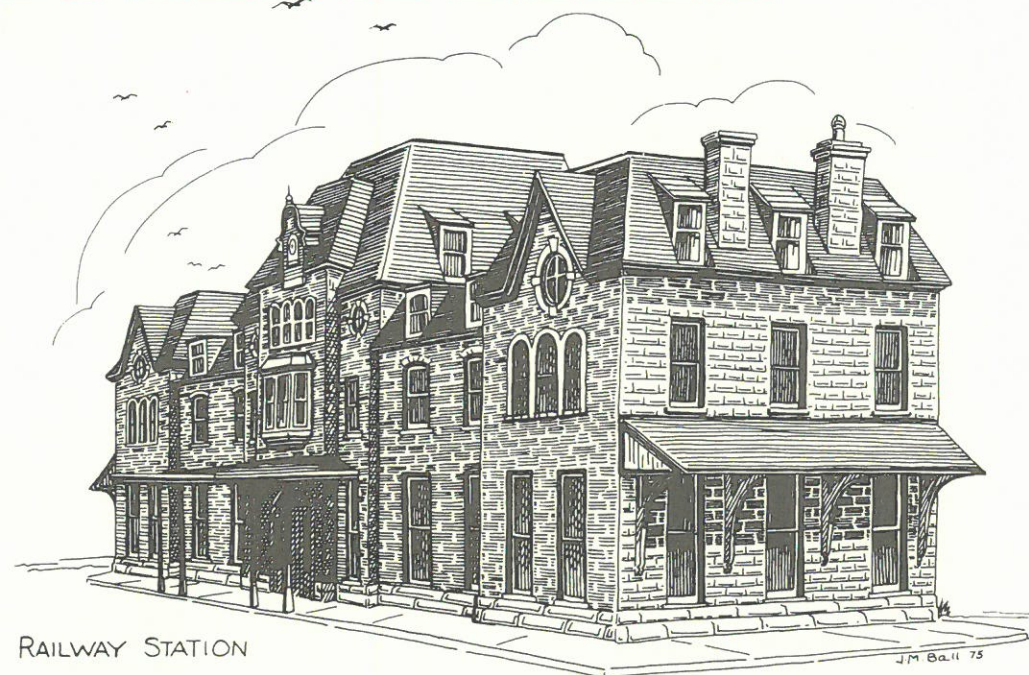
**T**his tour will take you through an area of town, once known as Riverhead, which was in the 19th century heavily populated by Irish immigrants. It was primarily a residential neighbourhood occupied by fishermen and tradesmen and their families. Most of the houses in this area are quite modest, although there are a few larger, more ornate residences. The most notable building in the neighbourhood is St. Patrick's Church whose fine Gothic spire dominates the west end of the city.

The tour begins at the RAILWAY STATION on the south side of Water Street. The station, which was officially opened in 1903, was designed by W. H. Massey, Chief Engineer with the railway builders, the Reid Company. It is built of local granite and has many classic Victorian railway station features such as the arched windows and the steep, varied roofline. In spite of some exterior renovations, the St. John's Railway Station retains its original Victorian character. Newfoundland no longer has a railway, but the station is still in use as a terminal for the transprovincial bus service.

The statue, titled **INDUSTRY**, which stands in front of the Railway Station, was carved by Charles Henderson, a Scottish stonemason who worked on the station

building. The sandstone figure is made from a gatepost remaining after the Anglican Cathedral was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1892.

Cross Water Street and proceed west along Water to Patrick Street. From here you can see the rail yards behind the Railway Station.



RAILWAY STATION

In the mid-19th century the area of the rail yards was part of the harbour, and

this stretch of Water Street was called the **MARINE PROMENADE**. The large

trees on the south side of Water Street originally lined the edge of the promenade.

Turn right onto Patrick Street and walk north. On your right is **ST. PATRICK'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**. The church was designed in 1853 but construction did not begin until 1864, and even then progress was slow because of a shortage of funds. Local societies and citizens responded to Bishop Mullock's appeals for money, supplies and labour and the building was finally consecrated in 1881. In 1912 much of the exterior stonework was

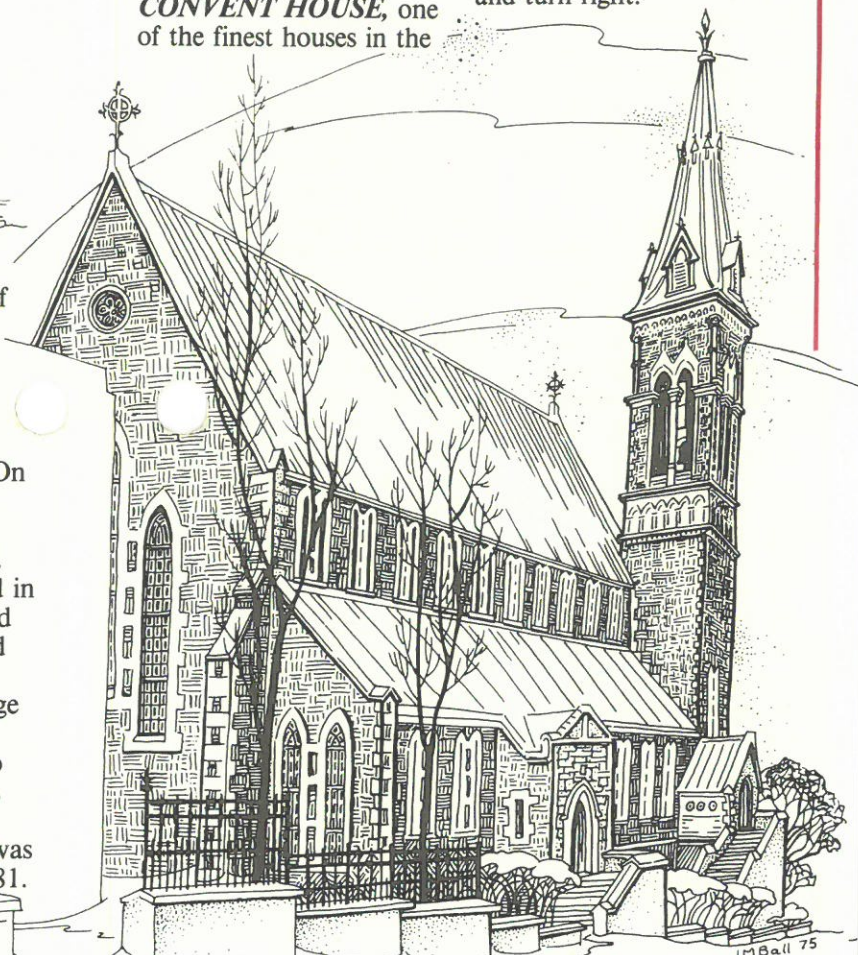
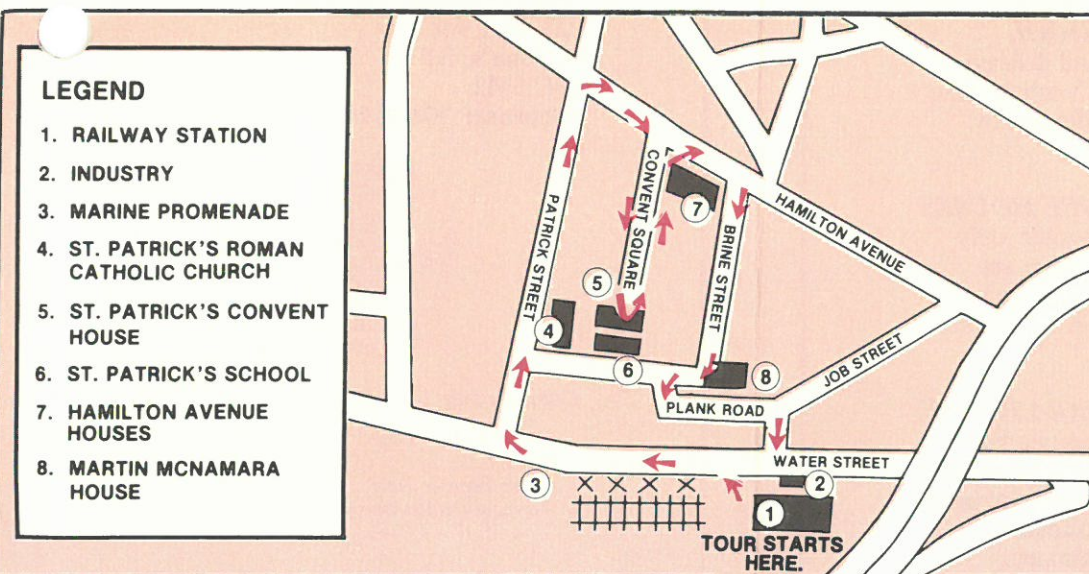
replaced and the spire was added. St. Patrick's Church, with its characteristic steeply pitched roof and pointed arches, is an excellent example of the early Gothic Revival style in church architecture.

Continue north on Patrick Street to Hamilton Avenue and turn right. Proceed east on Hamilton Avenue to Convent Square and turn right into Convent Square. The large building facing you from the square is the **ST. PATRICK'S CONVENT HOUSE**, one of the finest houses in the

neighbourhood. Completed in 1882, the Convent House is in the Second Empire style, with a central tower and curved mansard roof.

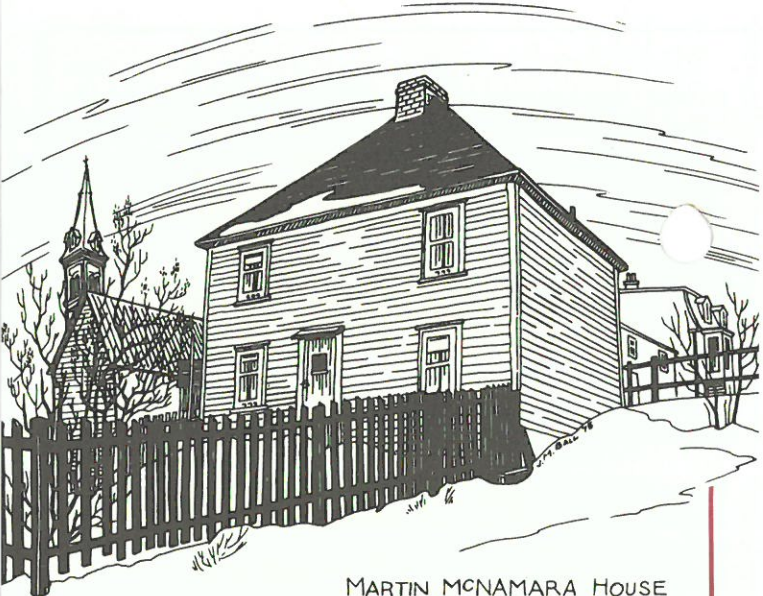
Behind the Convent House is the old **ST. PATRICK'S SCHOOL**. Notice the pointed windows and delicate buttresses, which echo the Gothic features of the nearby church and were designed by the same architect.

Walk back up Convent Square to Hamilton Avenue and turn right.



ST PATRICK'S CHURCH





MARTIN MCNAMARA HOUSE

The row houses on your right, with their modest decoration and simple gable roofs, are typical of the sort of housing built in St. John's in the 19th century.

Apart from these **HAMILTON AVENUE HOUSES** only isolated examples of the type are found in St. John's, as most such houses were destroyed in the Great Fire of 1892 and rebuilt in the more fashionable Second Empire style or the simpler bracketted Italianate style.

Continue east on Hamilton Avenue to Brine Street, and turn right into Brine Street. At the end of the road can be seen the **MARTIN MCNAMARA HOUSE**, a small house with a pyramidal roof. This structure is of uncertain but considerable age, having stood here at least since 1849, and is unusual

in the neighbourhood as an example of a house with a central chimney. This arrangement permitted all the rooms in the house to be heated from the same chimney, an important feature in a country with harsh weather and a shortage of masons.

Take the road running down next to the Martin McNamara House to Pl... Road. Walk east on Pl... Road to Job Street, south on Job Street to Water Street, and you have arrived at the Railway Station.

The tour ends at the Railway Station.

**S**T. JOHN'S  
WALKING TOURS

## Tour Highlights

### • RAILWAY STATION

The station, which was officially opened in 1903, is built of local granite and has many classic Victorian railway station features such as the arched windows and the steep, varied roofline.

### • MARINE PROMENADE

In the mid-19th century the area of the railyards was part of the harbour, and this stretch of Water Street was called the Marine Promenade.

### • ST. PATRICK'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Construction on the church began in 1864, and was not completed until 1912. With its characteristic steeply pitched roof and pointed arches, St. Patrick's church is an excellent example of the early Gothic Revival style in church architecture.

### • ST PATRICK'S CONVENT

Completed in 1882, the Convent house is in the Second Empire style, with a central tower and curved mansard roof.

### • ST. PATRICK'S SCHOOL

The pointed windows and delicate buttresses of St. Patrick's school echo the Gothic features of the nearby church.

### • HAMILTON AVENUE HOUSES

Apart from these row houses, only isolated examples of the type are found in St. John's, as most such houses were destroyed in the Great Fire of 1892.

### • MARTIN MCNAMARA HOUSE

This structure is of uncertain but considerable age, having stood here at least since 1849, and is unusual in the neighbourhood as an example of a house with a central chimney.

### Acknowledgements

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### Other Walking Tours in this Series:

- A Step Back in Time...  
Through the Streets of Old Downtown
- A Step Back in Time...  
Through the Historic East End

# A Step Back in Time Through the Historic West End

**S**T. JOHN'S  
WALKING TOURS

